



Model Overview - Part 2

The First Dimension - The Model of Self Awareness

This model helps to increase my self-awareness, as well as offer insight into other's behavior.

What is the importance of a story serving me in the moment, and is there a way to visualize it more clearly?

With the three questions in hand, how am I able to create greater self-awareness, and an awareness of where others are? With these questions, I'll introduce a visual representation of the answers. This model helps to increase self-awareness, as well as offer insight into other's behavior.

Review of Part 1 Article

In the previous article, I presented three questions and four concepts that have changed the way I view my life. In doing so, they have allowed me to be far less judgemental of myself and others, as well as find more meaning in my life. Here is a brief overview:

The Questions

When we ask myself the following three questions, they help us let go of the thoughts that don't serve us at that moment:

What is the story I'm telling?

What is the story I'm telling? - I ask this question about anything I'm thinking, especially when something doesn't feel right; this is the first step in creating a space between stimulus and response. By creating this space, it allows us to begin the process of moving from default to more conscious behavior.

Is it serving me in this moment?

Is it serving me in this moment? - With a clearer understanding of the story I'm telling, I ask whether it's serving me in this moment, right here and now; this helps expand that space. Focusing on this moment helps to let go of the baggage in the past and being fearful of the future by only focusing on the present moment.

Is There A More Authentic Story I Can Tell?

Is there a more authentic story I can tell? - With this final question, we increase the space even further, as this question allows us a broader view by considering multiple perspectives. These can include other perspectives of me, or of those around me. When we view any story from multiple perspectives, it always moves us in the direction of authenticity. If I have been beating myself up about the amount of work I'm getting done, or the quality of my relationship with my partner, I'm focused on the problem. When I look at both, what I have completed workwise or the strengths of our my relationships, I am telling a more authentic story that serves me.. In both cases, I'm depowering The Protector by telling a more balanced story.

The Concepts

In the first article, I introduced four character components:

The Narrator

Recognizing that we have an inner Narrator is a crucial key to identifying the daily stories we tell ourselves. For example, if I said, "I tell myself..." this is the Narrator I'm referring to. The Narrator is neither good nor bad, just a fact of how our brains work.

The Space

This refers to the space between stimulus and response. When no space exists between stimulus and response, especially with a story that doesn't serve us, we live by default. This may not be a big deal for the stories that serve us, however, when there is no space for stories that don't serve us, we live by the last thing we want:

default. One of the primary goals of this work is to increase that space so we have the ability to live in our world fully and with less fear. Having this space depowers fear



through stories that serve us. By creating a space between stimulus and response, we have the ability to create much greater agency in our lives and grow the appreciation we have for those we interact with.



Living by Default

Living by default can be a positive thing for the stories that serve us, below the line. I may be a good dad, but a terrible boss. Typically with the areas we thrive in, if someone asks us a story about being a parent, we may say, "Gee, I have no idea." Yet when pressed, we're probably going to really discuss the importance of having a good upbringing, knowing not to buy into the kids' poor behavior, and on from there. Living by default below the line is easy, takes into account a lot of factors, and leaves me feeling like I'm not a victim.

Above the line, if I'm a terrible boss, I automatically default to stories that have me victimized by my employees, powerless to change them... I'm judgemental of my employees and generally feel "they don't understand what I go through." When someone asks me about my business, I'm ready to launch with how the employees don't know what I do for them, and that they're incompetent and vindictive. These stories come out so fast that they almost feel rehearsed, and that's because they are; every time something happens with an employee, I use their behavior to justify how right I am in my story. All in the convenience of my own head, the Narrator ready at a moments notice. When I begin to implement the questions in my previous article, I begin to realize the role my stories play in coloring my perception of others. With this recognition, I stop living by default, begin questioning my stories, and try to create stories that serve everyone involved, especially me. I look at what I previously viewed as shortcomings of my employees and ask what I can do to help solve these issues.

The Protector

The part of our personality who is primarily concerned for our security, we call the Protector. The Protector doesn't want to shed light on our personal issues. In order to protect us from the world, it's ready to lash out without a moment's notice; this is often referred to as "the ego", otherwise known as our personality's core motivation to protect us from ourselves and the cruel version of the world it has created. The Protector plays a major role in coloring our stories in a negative way.

Wrap-Up

With these concepts and questions, let's move to a visual representation of the model. These will help you to fully comprehend the model, identify your emotions that rule your actions, and help you incorporate these questions into your everyday life.

The need for a visual model

One thing I realized was that while the questions are a significant step in the right direction, having a visual model that illustrates the process that these questions mandate would be very helpful. With this model, we are able to see where we are at any moment, and in cases of stories that don't serve us, help us to see where we want to be. Using this visual model has been a great tool for enhancing my self-awareness, but more importantly, it has helped immensely in creating more of the Space. I also believed that if the model was simple enough, it would allow these concepts to be shared with anyone, quickly and convincingly. The model is something I use regularly to think in further detail about where I am at the moment, and, to work in centering and grounding my story.

The Horizontal Line

We start with a simple horizontal line. From the standpoint of the questions, we identify the story we're telling, then look at whether it serves us or not and whether it falls above or below this line.

Is this serving me in this moment?

The question is simple and straightforward.

And on top of that, in most cases, we are very good at being able to answer the question. If the story serves us, it goes below the line. On the other hand, a story that doesn't serve me goes above the line. It's that simple.

Is this story
serving me in
this moment?

NO

YES

Also notice we aren't looking at emotion at this point. We can be very sad and have a story that serves us, but contrastingly, be very happy and telling a story that absolutely

doesn't serve us. In both cases, if we take a breath and ask the question, "Is this serving me in the moment?" Nine out of ten times the answer is clear to us.

Sometimes the knee-jerk reaction is, "Well, of course, it's serving me. Why wouldn't it be?" With any kind of a defensive response, you can rest assured that the story likely isn't serving you. If it were serving you and you asked yourself the question, your response would be something along the lines of, "Gee I think so." In other words, the question gets a response from a centered place, open for another look.

This applies interpersonally as well. If I ask somebody from a centered and grounded place whether the story they're telling themselves is serving them and I get a defensive response, it's most likely that person is telling a story that doesn't serve them. Whether we're talking to ourselves or somebody else, the goal is to ask and answer the question from a centered and grounded place, in other words, below the line.

The Power of the Line and the Second Question

With that question answered, we know whether the story we're telling goes above or below the line. It's deceptively simple and yet incredibly powerful. If I find that my story is above the line, I also recognize and begin the process of changing my thoughts into ones that serve me.

And while change may not come quickly, knowing that I have the ability to begin the process of changing the story also increases the space. The more space there is between stimulus and response, the more likely we can move to a story that serves us.



Above the Line - Our Default Responses

As we move north in above the line, the Space decreases between stimulus and response. In addition, we can also see that as we go further above the line, that we are moving to default responses. We are simply reacting automatically to the stimulus with a pre-determined response. Consider my son, in third grade, walking across the crosswalk hand in hand with me. As we are about half way across, a horn honks. He



spins around, from being darling to annoyed boy, only to realize it's his teacher waving at him with a huge smile. Of course, he immediately gets an embarrassed smile on his face and waves back. In the course of a second, he's gone from cute third grader to annoyed boy and right back to the cute third grader! He went to the annoyed place without any thought, it was a default reaction. For me, because of my experience as an adult, I had let go of that wiring, and didn't exhibit the same default behavior, instead I had much more space between stimulus and response.

This Is Where the Protector Begins to Come on the Scene

Whenever you're above the line, fear is the underlying driver. It's important to remember that wherever there's fear, the Protector is present and ready to rescue you. The Protector wants to save you from the situation you're experiencing. From his perspective, the world is anything but at his command; he feeds on the currency of powerlessness and victimization. He is very focused on the problem and has little to offer in terms of a solution.

Is this story
serving me in
this moment?

NO
Fear-based
Foundation



Instead, his actions tend to be self-defeating - both inwardly and outwardly focused. For example, if I were to tell myself, "I may not have lost as much weight as I had wanted," the Protector is ready to create a story of weakness and incompetence with a heaping helping of, "what's the point?" As a result of his assessment, he has me feeling "less-than", while happily pointing out those around me that are so much better at everything. It's a tough environment that the Protector creates in, and around us.

The same is true for situations that are external. The Protector takes the same feeling of victimization and powerlessness, and directs them outward. He's angry at the person in the situation and plots to make things better at the expense of you or others.

Right at the line, on the negative side, we may not notice that the Protector is present. Yet, as we move towards anger and rage, the Protector is fully in charge. He runs without the ability to look at the big picture and is unable to put things into perspective.

The Protector is only trying to help

As it may already be apparent to the reader, when the Protector is present, he defaults to fear to see that you're safe; this doesn't mean only in terms of physical safety. As a

matter of fact, in today's day and age where we don't need to worry about our physical safety, like our early ancestors, the Protector ends up being far more concerned with our emotional and situation safety, judging ourselves and those around us; it's a far more mental game.

In essence, with the wiring we received in earlier human development that was geared to help save us from the lion, has now found a way to be "useful". Yet, this "usefulness" is nothing more than stories that are rooted in fear, rather than living from an accepting place. Inevitably, this wiring does nothing but a disservice, promoting stories that do not serve us, or others. Additionally, the Protector is happy to take the mantle of being the author of these stories, and as it becomes more and more powerful, our stories tend to be rooted in fear and protection, rather than an openness to ourselves and those around us.

Below the Line Thinking

Stories that are serving us in the moment go below the line. Here we are in a place where our inner dialogue serves us and we have a holistic view of our inner and outer world. Truth be told, we're not likely to ask ourselves the second question when we're thinking below the line.

Is this story serving me in this moment?

Acceptance & Allowing

YES

Why is that? Even if I don't like a situation within or in front of me, because I'm telling a story that serves me, I'm also free to move toward the solution rather than wallowing in the problem with above the line thinking.

Above the Line Thinking - Doesn't Serve Me

When I've recognized that my story isn't serving me, I see that I'm thinking above the line. This thinking spans a wide range of emotions and strength. Just above the line, I may have mildly angry thoughts about an issue. As I move up from that point, I may move from smart to rage. Some of this storytelling is as quiet as a

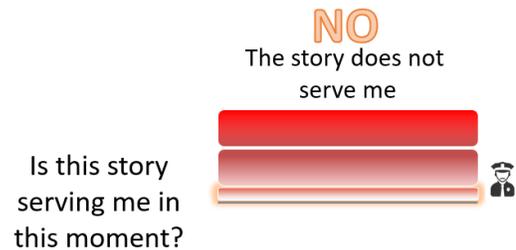
Is this story serving me in this moment?

NO
Fear-based
Foundation

mouse, but it's still there. Some of the storytelling is very positive, however, the vast majority of this thinking is negative. And underlying all of this is fear-based stories.

Just Above the Line Stories

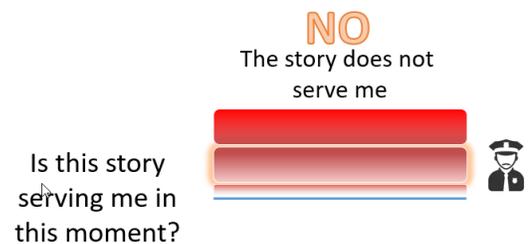
As we'll see, behaviors from the middle, to way above the line, can be truly awful. However, what I find fascinating is the variety of stories we tell ourselves on a constant basis that are just above the line. As I mentioned, stories that don't serve us can be very quiet, yet incredibly powerful when told over and over, year after year.



Thinking just above the line, in some ways, is the most insidious because it's seems to be so benign. It's that gentle voice that tells you to stay in for the night, not to cook from scratch, or to let the boss know you're struggling. "It will work itself out," is what the Narrator says. It's the part of you that is happy to wait for that close parking space, and it's also the part that gets annoyed with the other cars on the freeway. Because it's so close to the place of thoughts that serve us, we have a tendency to be unaware of them. While the long-term effects of these don't seem to be a big deal, ignoring them can leave us uninspired, lethargic, and unhappy, and ultimately living more of our lives in the space above the line.

Somewhere in the Middle, Above the Line

As we move up, we find our thoughts are much stronger, and more likely to move from mild stories that don't serve us to something much more severe. As the power of our emotions grow, the Narrator and Protector move into full swing, working to protect us by being critical of ourselves and others. The stories may be positive or negative, yet, are built on the underlying foundation of fear that is becoming more palpable. Here, we are propping ourselves up on the backs of our own selves and others by being superior or subordinate others. In addition, this is where the issues that have held us hostage in our lives reside.. It's where we are grossly self-critical. While the goal of the Narrator and the Protector is always for us to be better, the narration is largely negative and self-defeating.



Thoughts Turn Into Actions

It's here that the Narrator has gained enough power that we begin to express through words and actions what were feeling and start to take action. The thinking turns from observations that aren't serving, to thoughts and actions that aren't serving. Whether it's shaking our fist at the driver on the road, telling a co-work what a jerk the boss is, or berating our partner and kids, we're now putting internal thoughts into outer-world actions. Possibly more importantly, is that we're telling stories about ourselves and others that actively make the situation worse. "I don't deserve this because I'm not worthy of it." "I just want my unruly kid to realize what a jerk he's being." On a regular basis, this inner thinking is accompanied by outer action.

Above the Line - Our Default Responses

As we move north in above the line, the Space decreases between stimulus and response. In addition, we can also see that as we go further above the line, that we are moving to default responses. We are simply reacting automatically to the stimulus with a pre-determined response.



Consider my son, in third grade, walking across the crosswalk hand in hand with me. As we are about half way across, a horn honks. He spins around, from being darling to annoyed boy, only to realize it's his teacher waving at him with a huge smile. Of course, he immediately gets an embarrassed smile on his face and waves back. In the course of a second, he's gone from cute third grader to annoyed boy and right back to the cute third grader! He went to the annoyed place without any thought, it was a default reaction. For me, because of my experience as an adult, I had let go of that wiring, and didn't exhibit the same default behavior, instead I had much more space between stimulus and response.

This Is Where the Protector Begins to Come on the Scene

Whenever you're above the line, fear is the underlying driver. It's important to remember that wherever there's fear, the Protector is present and ready to rescue you. The Protector wants to save you from the situation you're experiencing. From his perspective, the world is anything but at his command; he feeds on the currency of

Is this story serving me in this moment?

NO
Fear-based
Foundation



powerlessness and victimization. He is very focused on the problem and has little to offer in terms of a solution.

Instead, his actions tend to be self-defeating - both inwardly and outwardly focused. For example, if I were to tell myself, "I may not have lost as much weight as I had wanted," the Protector is ready to create a story of weakness and incompetence with a heaping helping of, "what's the point?" As a result of his assessment, he has me feeling "less-than", while happily pointing out those around me that are so much better at everything. It's a tough environment that the Protector creates in, and around us.

The same is true for situations that are external. The Protector takes the same feeling of victimization and powerlessness, and directs them outward. He's angry at the person in the situation and plots to make things better at the expense of you or others.

Right at the line, on the negative side, we may not notice that the Protector is present. Yet, as we move towards anger and rage, the Protector is fully in charge. He runs without the ability to look at the big picture and is unable to put things into perspective.

The Protector is only trying to help

As it may already be apparent to the reader, when the Protector is present, he defaults to fear to see that you're safe; this doesn't mean only in terms of physical safety. As a matter of fact, in today's day and age where we don't need to worry about our physical safety, like our early ancestors, the Protector ends up being far more concerned with our emotional and situation safety, judging ourselves and those around us; it's a far more mental game.

In essence, with the wiring we received in earlier human development that was geared to help save us from the lion, has now found a way to be "useful". Yet, this "usefulness" is nothing more than stories that are rooted in fear, rather than living from an accepting place. Inevitably, this wiring does nothing but a disservice, promoting stories that do not serve us, or others. Additionally, the Protector is happy to take the mantle of being the author of these stories, and as it becomes more and more powerful, our stories tend to be rooted in fear and protection, rather than an openness to ourselves and those around us.

Way Up High, Above the Line

As we continue north of the line, our stories become even stronger and are more likely to move from thoughts to actions. The actions can move to much more awful activities

such as verbal or physical abuse of a spouse or child. Yelling at a boss or co-worker, or telling yourself things you would never allow anyone else to say to you.

Where our Standard Societal Demons Exist

At the far reaches of the model, our standard societal demons with people like Stalin and Hitler exist. As is fairly obvious, the potential for behavior that doesn't serve us has a nearly unlimited amount of potential. Thankfully, the worst examples are few and far between.

What the Model Guides Us to Do

With the benefit of the model and the three questions, there are a number of things that become apparent in our quest for a life of contentment and meaning. When we realize that the suffering we feel is based on the stories we've told from an "above the line perspective", and that there's a possibility to change them to something more authentic, we have a recipe to regain a sense of agency (control) in our lives. From that perspective, let's look at what some of those basic ingredients are that are instructive from the model and questions.

The Importance of the Questions VS Our Emotions

With the awareness the model brings, and its focus on whether my thinking is serving me or not, I am beginning the process of letting go of emotions as the first indicator of my well being. By simply asking if your thinking is serving you in that moment, or visualizing whether you're thinking is above the line or not, is a huge step in the direction of authentic self-awareness. Taking that small moment is the first step in breaking the Protector's hold on the areas of your life in which you struggle. Even if you're in a rage, asking the question, during or after, is essential in moving in this direction. You might not change your behavior in that specific moment, but at long last, there is a crack in the armor. Asking begins to increase the space and moving you toward the lower half of the model.



Moving Below the Line

Clearly, the first thing that becomes apparent is that you want to spend more of your time below the line, a place where you are served by your thoughts. Whether your

stories are words or images, they conjure feelings. You want to let go of the ones that aren't serving you and trade them for those that do and are below the line. If we find that our story isn't serving us, we simply look to the third question, "Is there a more authentic story I can tell?" While the feelings below the line still may be negative, we are in a place where we are able to move forward. This question simply encourages you to consider changing the story to one that is serving.

Our Days - Moving Above and Below The Line

We move above and below the line fluidly and situationally. Along with recognizing that we live a substantial portion of our lives below the line, understanding that we move up and down the model throughout our days is critical in acknowledging the old adage of being "only human". When we understand this movement, we increase the space; this normal and natural movement is the simple awareness that everyone on the planet goes through. Simply put: It's how we're wired. Understanding this grants us a break from self-criticism, as well as a break from those we're around exhibiting above the line behavior.

Where We Live a Substantial Portion of Our Lives

At this point, it is interesting to consider the revelation that there is a great deal of our lives where we live below the line. When we look at these "below the line" areas of our life, it's amazing how effortless they are. I may have to work harder at certain parts, but from below the line, I'm inspired to just do it. However, this feeling is opposed to the hard-fought motivation to accomplish tasks from above the line.

Recognizing that we already have the ability to accomplish many of life's difficulties without resistance and struggle becomes the basis of how we want all parts of our lives to consistently work. At the same time, we have the benefit of easy recognition that we're always going to have times where our stories move above the line, allowing far less resistance, while also letting us move back below the line more easily and quickly.

When we realize that we all think above the line and have the ability to change our stories, our lives in a fundamental way. For one, we recognize both our own behavior that doesn't serve us as well as those in our environment. Secondly, when we recognize that we all contain this above the line behavior, we find a sense of appreciation; this appreciation is for those who venture to this point and begin to decipher how to influence themselves and others to behave in a manner that serves everyone.

Practice Equals Change

When we look at moving our stories below the line, practice is the key to change from a variety of perspectives. Probably the most important aspect of the concept of practice is that it helps to take the Protector off the personal change job. When we decide to practice, we give the Protector the ability to relax. Secondly, practice may make perfect, but that is primarily because we have given ourselves the room to change. By framing my intended change as “practice”, I provide myself the space to make mistakes, learn from them, and grow. It provides me time by removing the Protector’s unreasonable and overly aggressive timeframes for change. Practice allows me to be the authentic me as I make my way to become the person I wish to be.

In our next article, we will concentrate on how our emotions can further refine the model to more thoroughly account for the range of possibilities above and below the line. We will also discuss the diverse “personalities” based on where our current stories fall, according to the model.

Keywords for Press Release #2 #CT-Done

Self-Awareness
Relationships
Authenticity
Personal Development
Psychology
Human Behavior
Leadership
The Human Condition
Self-Development
Emotions
Personality Theories

Above the Line - Our Default Responses

As we move north in above the line, the Space decreases between stimulus and response. In addition, we can also see that as we go further above the line, that we are moving to default responses. We are simply reacting automatically to the stimulus with a pre-determined response.

Consider my son, in third grade, walking across the crosswalk hand in hand with me. As we are about half way across, a horn honks. He spins around, from being darling to annoyed boy, only to realize it's his teacher waving at him with a huge smile. Of course, he immediately gets an embarrassed smile on his face and waves back. In the course of a second, he's gone from cute third grader to annoyed boy and right back to the cute third grader! He went to the annoyed place without any thought, it was a default reaction. For me, because of my experience as an adult, I had let go of that wiring, and didn't exhibit the same default behavior, instead I had much more space between stimulus and response.



This Is Where the Protector Begins to Come on the Scene

Whenever you're above the line, fear is the underlying driver. It's important to remember that wherever there's fear, the Protector is present and ready to rescue you. The Protector wants to save you from the situation you're experiencing. From his perspective, the world is anything but at his command; he feeds on the currency of powerlessness and victimization. He is very focused on the problem and has little to offer in terms of a solution.

Is this story serving me in this moment?

NO
Fear-based
Foundation



Instead, his actions tend to be self-defeating - both inwardly and outwardly focused. For example, if I were to tell myself, "I may not have lost as much weight as I had wanted," the Protector is ready to create a story of weakness and incompetence with a heaping helping of, "what's the point?" As a result of his assessment, he has me feeling "less-than", while happily pointing out those around me that are so much better at everything. It's a tough environment that the Protector creates in, and around us.

The same is true for situations that are external. The Protector takes the same feeling of victimization and powerlessness, and directs them outward. He's angry at the person in the situation and plots to make things better at the expense of you or others.

Right at the line, on the negative side, we may not notice that the Protector is present. Yet, as we move towards anger and rage, the Protector is fully in charge. He runs without the ability to look at the big picture and is unable to put things into perspective.

The Protector is only trying to help

As it may already be apparent to the reader, when the Protector is present, he defaults to fear to see that you're safe; this doesn't mean only in terms of physical safety. As a matter of fact, in today's day and age where we don't need to worry about our physical safety, like our early ancestors, the Protector ends up being far more concerned with our emotional and situation safety, judging ourselves and those around us; it's a far more mental game.

In essence, with the wiring we received in earlier human development that was geared to help save us from the lion, has now found a way to be "useful". Yet, this "usefulness" is nothing more than stories that are rooted in fear, rather than living from an accepting place. Inevitably, this wiring does nothing but a disservice, promoting stories that do not serve us, or others. Additionally, the Protector is happy to take the mantle of being the author of these stories, and as it becomes more and more powerful, our stories tend to be rooted in fear and protection, rather than an openness to ourselves and those around us.